

**Lesotho: Support for Forestry**

**Ex-post evaluation**

<b>OECD sector</b>	31220 / Forest development	
<b>BMZ project number</b>	1991 66 083	
<b>Project-executing agency</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Co-operatives, Marketing and Youth Affairs; Forestry Division	
<b>Consultant</b>	-	
<b>Year of evaluation</b>	<b>2002</b>	
	<b>Project appraisal (planned)</b>	<b>Ex-post evaluation (actual)</b>
<b>Start of implementation</b>	Q 1/1993	Q 1/1993
<b>Period of implementation</b>	24 months	75 months
<b>Investment costs</b>	EUR 1.79 million	EUR 1.39 million
<b>Counterpart contribution</b>	None	None
<b>Financing through FC funds</b>	EUR 1.79 million	EUR 1.39 million
<b>Other institutions/donors involved</b>	GTZ, DED	GTZ, DED
<b>Performance rating</b>	4	
• <b>Significance / relevance</b>	5	
• <b>Effectiveness</b>	3	
• <b>Efficiency</b>	4	

**Brief Description, Overall Objective and Project Purposes with Indicators**

The FC/TC cooperative project financed afforestation measures with trees and bushes in the districts of Maseru and Mafeteng outside of the designated state forest areas within the framework of a pilot project. The planting was carried out by the population itself for its own ends with technical and material support being provided under the project (social forestry).

The “development and testing of concepts for the implementation of measures in the field of forestry in the districts of Maseru and Mafeteng” (project purpose pilot phase 1991-1994) was to contribute to stabilizing the environment and enable the population to supply itself with firewood and wood products (overall objective). As regards the project purpose, under the guidance of TC the following indicators were to be achieved by March 1996:

- a) Elaboration of the necessary concepts and start of implementation
- b) Planting of at least 1 million small trees by the target group
- c) Timely creation of the tree nursery infrastructure (especially for the FC component)

The project purpose was updated for the TC component over time, but an adjustment did not seem necessary for the FC component.

## **Project Conception / Major Deviations from the original Project Planning and their main Causes**

The FC component comprised the following activities:

- Expansion of the state-owned tree nurseries, access roads, offices and living space for forestry staff, classrooms for the consultants,
- Seeds and plants as well as mother plantations,
- Vehicles (with spare parts) for consulting and distribution of the seedlings,
- Office equipment,
- Production and purchase of training and consulting materials.

The TC component involved staffing support for the project-executing agency (Forestry Division in the Ministry of Agriculture) for the planning and application of all individual measures including responsibility for the provision of the FC contributions.

The implementation of the project and the flow of the FC funds were difficult and required a 4-year extension of the FC component, originally planned for only two years. The main reasons for this are:

- Low administrative efficiency of the partner (e.g. substantial delay in readiness for disbursement, long delays of construction measures, staffing bottlenecks),
- Hesitant demand by the target group for plant materials for the afforestation that, despite subsidies, developed slowly compared with the assumptions in the project planning,
- Political tension that led to the unrest in the year 1998.

The FC budget was utilized to only 78% since the State of Lesotho assumed all local labor costs (originally part of FC) and the road construction was cut back considerably. Some of the savings were used to purchase more vehicles and equipment in line with demand and in accordance with the longer project period.

## **Key Results of the Impact Analysis and Performance Rating**

The FC measures enabled Lesotho's forest service (and the TC component) to apply the chosen consulting and afforestation approach without serious material obstacles or bottlenecks. However, for economic and strategic reasons it would have been better to plan to have private tree nurseries from the beginning. This would have saved the costs for expansion and operation of the state nurseries (operating costs approx. 2-3 times higher) and would have given the private operators more time to concentrate on their work under intensive guidance and to develop a certain routine in cooperation with the consultants and the afforestation programme.

The high degree of dependence of state financing programmes on the planting of trees remains problematic. Despite the expected good profitability for the users the planting involved high risks (livestock, fire, theft of the wood) and, as is the case with afforestation measures, extremely long periods before earnings are generated. The situation with the fruit trees is significantly better: they were already delivered and sold by the private nurseries directly to the consumers several years ago.

Beyond their direct economic impacts the afforestation measures are useful owing to their positive ecological effects. Low soil density and thicker ground vegetation were noted, especially in the wood lots. This improves the water balance of the site and thus the conditions for growth of the trees themselves. The good ground cover also guarantees effective protection against erosion in the area. Yet these effects are limited to the areas that are actually being

afforested, at the moment approx. 2 km<sup>2</sup> annually. An ornithologist (DED) reported a small increase in the biodiversity and in the number of birds as a result of the afforestation.

The protection of the environment and the natural resources is an important project priority. In the meantime, a trend towards more positive reception of trees on the part of the population can be observed, indicated by the appearance of hedges, single trees and groups of trees in yards and inside many villages. The Social Forestry System also offers poorer parts of the population good conditions for participating and can stimulate personal initiative within the target group (self-help). Mainly poor people benefit from the project. In general, participation in the programmes by women is active and above-average; with topics such as wood production and fruit-growing they reach areas that have traditionally been a woman's domain.

The problems of sustainability that are inherent to the project approach – in terms of both the social forestry concept that is tied to state financing and tree nurseries – were not tackled until 1998, and a satisfactory solution has not been found. The high degree of insecurity and fluctuation of funds for afforestation activities already became evident during the term of the project and could not always be compensated for by the project.

Evaluation of the success of the FC contribution itself is only possible to a very limited extent since it cannot be examined separately from the various TC phases. Yet, based on the key criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, significance and relevance an overall assessment of the developmental effectiveness of the FC component within the context of the cooperative project can be conducted:

Of the three indicators of achievement of the goal for the pilot phase, the TC component was not achieved in full (introduction of a broad-scale afforestation strategy) and the two physical indicators were achieved nearly 2 years later (number of successfully planted trees/growth rate, functioning infrastructure). Overall we judge its effectiveness to still be sufficient (rating 3).

Regarding its efficiency the project paints a heterogeneous picture: the expansion of the capacities of the state-owned tree nurseries was proven to be neither appropriate nor sustainable. An exception is investments in seeds and plants and in the establishment of mother plantations for fruit trees (9% of the FC funds), which we generally judge to be positive. Overall we classify the efficiency of the FC contribution as slightly insufficient (rating 4).

Measured by the difficulty of the overall objective to contribute to energy supply and resource protection, the physical results fall far short of the expectations on which the project was based. Since the model of the state-owned tree nurseries is not exemplary overall and since it could not be applied with broad-scale effect and rather hindered the development of the private sector, altogether we classify the significance and relevance of all measures together to clearly have insufficient developmental effect (rating 5).

Therefore, overall we assess the project as having slightly insufficient developmental effectiveness (rating 4).

### **General Conclusions applicable to all Projects**

Theoretical projections of need for wood and resources protection, for example (here on the basis of national extrapolations of energy needs) and afforestation targets derived from these projections have high priority in political analysis and discussion. They are less suitable for planning specific production capacities for tree nurseries, however, which should be designed according to the actual development of needs and based on the respective socio-economic and cultural situation.

Large capacities at nurseries can also be built up directly in the private sector insofar as the nurseries demonstrate enough planning reliability (guaranteed turnover) and can build up their professional competence adequately – i.e. consulting is necessary.

**Legend**

Developmentally successful: Ratings 1 to 3	
Rating 1	Very high or high degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 2	Satisfactory degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 3	Overall sufficient degree of developmental effectiveness
Developmental failures: Ratings 4 to 6	
Rating 4	Overall slightly insufficient degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 5	Clearly insufficient degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 6	The project is a total failure

**Criteria for the Evaluation of Project Success**

The evaluation of a project’s “developmental effectiveness” and its assignment during the final evaluation to one of the various levels of success described below in more detail concentrate on the following fundamental questions :

- Are the **project objectives** reached to a sufficient degree (aspect of project **effectiveness**)?
- Does the project generate sufficient **significant developmental effects** (project **relevance** and **significance** measured by the achievement of the overall development-policy objective defined beforehand and its effects in political, institutional, socio-economic and socio-cultural as well as ecological terms)?
- Are the **funds/expenses** that were and are being employed/incurred to reach the objectives appropriate and how can the project’s microeconomic and macroeconomic impact be measured (aspect of **efficiency** of the project conception)?
- To the extent that undesired (**side**) **effects** occur, are these tolerable?

We do not treat **sustainability**, a key aspect to consider for project evaluation, as a separate category of evaluation but instead as a cross-cutting element of all four fundamental questions on project success. A project is sustainable if the project-executing agency and/or the target group are able to continue to use the project facilities that have been built for a period of time that is, overall, adequate in economic terms or to carry on with the project activities on their own and generate positive results after the financial, organizational and/or technical support has come to an end.